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CONTENTS

25X1A

1. SINO-LAOTIAN JOINT COMMUNIQUE

2. SOUTH KOREAN VICE PRESIDENT MAY BE REMOVED FROM SUCCESSION

25X1A

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25X1A

THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION

25X1A

28 Aug 56

Current Intelligence Bulletin

Page 2

25X1A

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1. SINO-LAOTIAN JOINT COMMUNIQUE

25X1A

Laotian prime minister Souvanna Phouma has apparently taken the first step toward accepting Chinese Communist economic aid. At the close of his visit to Peiping, he declared that Laos was "deeply moved"

by a Chinese offer of aid and has requested the Communists to send representatives to Laos to make firsthand observations for future planning. Final acceptance of aid will probably await the outcome of the negotiations between the Laotian government and the Pathet Lao. Prior to his departure for Peiping, Souvanna had said he would not accept economic aid.

Details of the Chinese Communist offer have not been publicized, but along the lines of its agreement with Cambodia, Peiping has probably offered a grant in aid requiring no repayment or other "strings." Most of the aid will probably be concentrated on programs with a popular appeal, such as educational institutions, small industries, and rural developments.

In the joint communiqué signed by Chou En-lai and Souvanna Phouma, the Laotian prime minister reaffirmed previous assurances given the Pathet Lao that Laos would allow no foreign bases on its territory and join no military alliances "as long as its security is not menaced." In discussing the joint communiqué, Souvanna Phouma said, "We cannot subscribe to SEATO." Both countries affirmed their support of the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" and agreed to develop economic and cultural relations.

The Laotian delegation will stop over in Hanoi on 28 August where it will probably receive promises of nonintervention in Laotian affairs, in return for a statement on the desirability of closer relations.

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**2. SOUTH KOREAN VICE PRESIDENT MAY BE REMOVED
FROM SUCCESSION**

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A member of the Korean National Assembly has announced he has acquired the signatures of the one third of the assembly needed to introduce a constitutional amendment to remove Vice President Chang from succession to the presidency. He intends to introduce the proposal next month.

Some Liberal Party leaders have expressed misgivings concerning the unfavorable publicity which might result from a move to amend the constitution.

It is thus uncertain whether the party will be able to muster the necessary two-thirds vote in the assembly to pass the proposal.

"Leftist" elements are supporting the move, probably in an effort to intensify political confusion and to prevent Chang's Democratic Party from consolidating its position as the major opposition party.

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THE ARAB-ISRAELI SITUATION
(Information as of 1700, 27 August)

According to the acting chairman of the Israeli-Syrian Mixed Armistice Commission, Israel has rejected a proposal from Syria offering to destroy its recently constructed defensive positions in the northern demilitarized zone if Israel would do the same in the central and southern demilitarized zones. Israel reportedly claims that the situation is not similar, since there are no Arabs for Syria to protect in the northern sector, whereas the Israeli settlers in the central and southern zones need "civilian defense shelters."

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The Arab villagers in the central demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria have complained to the UN truce organization about the treatment they received from the Israeli state police which "they can no longer endure." According to the acting chairman of the Mixed Armistice Commission, UN truce supervisor Burns believes these Arabs are better off in the demilitarized zone than they would be in a refugee camp in Syria. He has proposed that Syria meet with Israel to arrange for a delegation of villagers to visit a refugee camp in Syria, but has not yet received a reply from Damascus. The American embassy believes that Syria will probably oppose any decrease in the number of Arabs in the demilitarized zone.

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